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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2004

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Mu'taz **Hyassat** (Jordan)

II. Calendar of conferences and meetings

C. Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

1. United Nations Office at Nairobi

1. At its 459th meeting, on 8 September 2004, the Committee on Conferences considered paragraphs 22 to 24 of the report of the Secretary-General on pattern of conferences (A/59/159) concerning the utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Committee learned that there had been steady progress and improvement in the utilization of facilities at Nairobi since the establishment of a permanent interpretation service in 2001, making Nairobi the only conference centre in Africa with the capacity to interpret in six languages. The modernization of the Nairobi conference facilities was well along in the planning stage. The adoption of the Electronic Meetings Planning and Resource Allocation System at Headquarters under the integrated global management initiative had helped to streamline conference management. However, Nairobi, alone among the duty stations, still received only approximately 50 per cent of its funding from regular budget allocations.

Discussion

2. Much concern was expressed that the high proportion of extrabudgetary to regular budget funding might hamper progress at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and might be adding to the difficulty of attracting qualified candidates to fill translation and interpretation posts, along with the lack of security in Nairobi and the scarcity of employment opportunities for spouses, among other things. There was also competition from other conference centres in Africa. Delegations thought

that new methods were needed to attract more meetings to Nairobi. A request was made for a list of meetings held at Nairobi.

2. Conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

3. At the same meeting, the Committee considered paragraphs 25 to 30 of the report of the Secretary-General, which provide an overview of efforts to improve utilization of the facilities at the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa and the handicaps to be overcome.